

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method for making individual pieces of extruded chewy granola comprising the steps of:
 - (a) Mixing water, dry ingredients, and binder syrup to form a wet granola dough;
 - (b) Resting said wet granola dough for at least 1 hour;
 - 5 (c) Extruding said rested wet granola dough through an opening;
 - (d) Cutting said extruded granola mixture into pieces; and
 - (e) Drying said granola pieces.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein said binder syrup is pre-mixed with water prior to said binder syrup's addition to dry ingredients to form said wet granola dough at step a).
3. The method of claim 1 wherein said binder syrup is pre-mixed with water and maintained at a temperature between about 70 °F to about 130 °F prior to said binder syrup's addition to dry ingredients to form said wet granola dough at step a).
4. The method of claim 1 wherein a binder syrup is pre-mixed without water prior to said binder syrup's addition to dry ingredients and water to form said wet granola dough step a).
5. The method of claim 1 wherein dry ingredients are mixed with water prior to said binder syrup's addition to said dry ingredients wherein said binder syrup is at a temperature between about 70 °F and about 130 °F, to form said wet granola dough at step a).
6. The method of claim 1 wherein said dry ingredients are pre-mixed prior to said binder syrup's addition to said dry ingredients to form a chewy granola prior to step a).

7. The method of claim 1 wherein said dry ingredients and water are pre-mixed prior to said binder syrup's addition to said dry ingredients to form said wet granola dough at step a).
8. The method of claim 1 wherein glycerin, sorbitol, shortening and corn syrup are mixed and heated to about 120 °F and wherein granulated sugar, corn syrup solids and salt are then added to form a binder syrup prior to said binder syrup's addition to said dry ingredients to form a chewy granola prior to step a).
9. The method of claim 8 wherein water is added to said binder syrup to form a mixture and wherein said mixture is heated to about 130 °F.
10. The method of claim 1 wherein said wet granola dough comprises at least 9 percent water by weight.
11. The method of claim 1 wherein said wet granola dough comprises between about 6 percent and about 10 percent water by weight.
12. The method of claim 1 wherein said wet granola dough comprises between about 10 percent and about 14 percent water by weight.
13. The method of claim 1 wherein the said extruding of step (c) occurs with a die compression ratio of between about 1 and about 6.
14. The method of claim 1 wherein the said extruding of step (c) occurs with a die compression ratio of between about 2 and about 3.
15. The method of claim 1 wherein the said extruding of step (c) occurs with a filler compression ratio of between about 1 and about 3.

16. The method of claim 1 wherein said extruding of step (c) occurs with a total compression ratio of between about 1 and about 10.
17. The method of claim 1 wherein said extruding of step (c) occurs with a total compression ratio of between about 4 and about 6.
18. The method of claim 1 wherein said extruded chewy granola piece formed by steps (c) and (d) is non-rectangular in shape.
19. The method of claim 1 wherein the cutting of step (d) produces bite-sized extruded chewy granola pieces.
20. The method of claim 1 wherein said extruded chewy granola pieces after the drying of step (e) comprise between about 4 and about 10 percent water by weight.
21. The method of claim 1 wherein said drying of step (e) takes place in an oven.
22. The method of claim 1 wherein said drying of step (e) occurs below 400 °F.
23. The method of claim 1 wherein said drying of step (e) occurs between about 250°F and about 350°F and for about 5 to about 10 minutes.
24. The method of claim 1 wherein said drying of step (e) occurs below 200 °F.
25. The method of claim 1 wherein said drying of step (e) occurs below 130 °F.
26. A chewy granola piece made by the process of claim 1.
27. The method of claim 1 wherein said extruded chewy granola pieces become extruded crunchy granola pieces after the drying of step (e) and wherein said crunchy granola pieces comprise between about 0 to about 4 percent water by weight.
28. The method of claim 27 wherein said drying of step (e) occurs above about 250°F for about 10 to 20 minutes.

29. The method of claim 1 wherein said wet granola dough is mixed with a sigma blade mixer in a batch process.
30. The method of claim 1 wherein wet granola dough is mixed with a continuous mixer.
31. The method of claim 1 wherein wet granola dough is extruded with a roll extruder.
32. The method of claim 31 wherein said roll extruder comprises a plurality of rolls with about an 11-inch diameter.
33. The method of claim 31 wherein said roll extruder comprises rolls at least 5 inches in diameter.
34. The method of claim 31 wherein said roll extruder is about 36 inches to about 50 inches wide.
35. A crunchy granola piece made by the process of claim 27.
36. The method of claim 1 wherein said extruded chewy granola pieces are filled with a filling at step c) to become a filled granola piece.
37. The method of claim 36 wherein said filling is selected from the group consisting of a fruit filling, a fat-based compound, a sugar-based compound, a chocolate-based filling, a cream-based compound, a custard-based compound, and a yogurt compound.
38. The method of claim 1 wherein said wet granola dough is extruded with a screw extruder.
39. The method of claim 1 wherein said dry ingredients comprise rolled oats and wherein said rolled oats are encapsulated from the group consisting of a carbohydrate, a hydrocolloid, a wax, a fat, and mixtures thereof.

40. The method of claim 39 wherein said encapsulated rolled oats comprises:

about 50 to 99.8 percent rolled oats;

about 0 to 50 percent sugar;

about 0 to 50 percent coconut oil; and

5 about 0 to 30 percent water.

41. The method of claim 39 wherein said encapsulated rolled oats comprises:

about 60 to 90 percent rolled oats;

about 5 to 20 percent sugar;

about 0 to 10 percent coconut oil; and

5 about 0 to 10 percent water.

42. The method of claim 1 wherein said dry ingredients comprise crisp rice and wherein said crisp rice are encapsulated from the group consisting of a carbohydrate, a hydrocolloid, a wax, a fat, and mixtures thereof.

43. The method of claim 42 wherein said encapsulated crisp rice comprises:

about 60 to 90 percent crisp rice;

about 5 to 20 percent sugar;

about 0 to 10 percent coconut oil; and

5 about 0 to 10 percent water.

44. The method of claim 42 wherein said encapsulated crisp rice comprises:

about 50 to 99.8 percent crisp rice;

about 0 to 50 percent sugar;

about 0 to 50 percent coconut oil; and

5 about 0 to 30 percent water.

45. A filled granola piece made by the process of claim 34.

46. A method for making individual pieces of extruded chewy granola comprising the steps of:

- (a) Mixing water with at least one dry ingredient to form a pre-hydrated cereal grain;
- (b) Resting said pre-hydrated cereal grain for at least about one-half hour;
- 5 (c) Mixing said pre-hydrated cereal grain with binder syrup to make said wet granola dough;
- (d) Extruding said wet granola dough through an opening; and
- (e) Cutting said extruded granola mixture into pieces;
- (f) Drying said granola pieces.

47. The method of claim 46 wherein said extruded chewy granola pieces become extruded crunchy granola pieces after the drying of step (f).

48. The method of claim 46 wherein said extruded chewy granola pieces are filled with a filling at step (d) to become a filled granola piece.